

GAL 5



((GAL 1:10-24))

PRAY

For the past several weeks we have been discussing different aspects of the GOSPEL under the title GOSPEL BOMBS—which means that what we are going to look at today is the third installment in that series--

GOSPEL BOMBS Part 3

Before we do that though, I DO need to DO a little bit of review from LAST WEEK (since what we will be talking about is essentially just a continuation of what we discussed then)---AND that IS getting the GOSPEL right...

...THAT (IOW) are the types of GOSPEL BOMBS which Paul is (now) dropping in these latter verses of CHAPTER ONE.

(so starting w/our first point of review from last week—which is actually number 4 in the entire series...)

4. Getting the gospel right is not dependent upon the approval of Christian rock-stars.

As we have been discussing for several weeks now, the Galatians were caught up in all the hype surrounding the Christian rock-stars (of their day)—men like Peter and James—the “pillars” (as Paul calls them in 2:9) of the Christian Faith, the BIG WIG apostles of the Jerusalem Church.

And as a result, when such fallible men (as all men are—even those who can at times function in an infallible state under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit)---WHEN such men ERR---those who man-crushes on them—ERR as well!

And that is EXACTLY what happened...

Peter and James became convinced that THE GOSPEL being preached by the circumcision party was the RIGHT ONE (a gospel which stated that although there was a new way to be RIGHT w/GOD which is through faith in Christ; the old ways must ALSO still be observed—i.e. circumcision, Sabbaths, sacrifices, separation and kosher foods)...

Which means two things:

(one) The gospel of faith alone in order to BE RIGHT w/God (to enter into relationship w/Him) THAT they had originally held to (the one confirmed as the correct/true/sound gospel w/Paul during his previous visit to Jerusalem) was NOW the WRONG ONE (it was insufficient since it lacked the observance of the OC clean laws).

(two) They (or more specifically PETER) decided send a delegation to the other churches (most especially those GENTILE churches where there would BE NO circumcised individuals) informing them of the changes (and this 'different gospel') that Was NOW (all the rage) back in Jerusalem.

And (b/c again) the Galatians were so concerned ABOUT such things (and being in with the "IN-CROWD) in Jerusalem, this different gospel (than the ONE preached by PAUL) was MET w/ NO resistance...

It was (IOW) assumed to be the RIGHT ONE...

...Assumed because it bore the "seal of approval" from Christianity's biggest rock-stars.

Paul however(as we saw from verse 10) was not impressed by such things—nor seeking the approval of any man.

AND THAT BECAUSE HE KNEW—getting the GOSPEL RIGHT is NOT dependent upon that...

NOT only can the BEST men get it WRONG, but (as he warns in verses 8 and 9) such men will NOT serve as a valid EXCUSE come judgment DAY...

NO-One (iow) will get off the hook before GOD if their gospel is wrong---and that NO MATTER who they got it from (man or angel!).

Which brings US to last point (from last week) AND WHERE we see (the first) of WHAT (then) is required to GET it RIGHT---and it is (what we would expect): NOT the words/approval of MAN —but GOD and the support/approval found in HIS WORD.

5. Getting the gospel right requires the support of God's Word.

AND NOT just part of God's Word---but all of it. Another one of the BIG MISTAKES being made today (in people's attempts) to understand the GOSPEL is using only the NT to DO it. Yet when Paul tells Timothy (in 2Ti 3:15) that it is the "sacred writings" which will make him "wise unto salvation" he is speaking of the OT! Paul's NT GOSPEL (the CORRECT/TRUE/SOUND GOSPEL which he is attempting to persuade the Galatians BACK in the direction of) was (therefore) a GOSPEL BUILT on the same EXACT principles that it had throughout the OT. IOW: It wasn't "a different gospel"---which is what he accuses the GALATIANS of embracing (in the gospel they had received from the circumcision PARTY).

SO (then) though GETTING THE GOSPEL RIGHT is not dependent upon what the BIG WIGS and Christian rock-stars of Christian history have thought)---that doesn't mean it is whatever WE WANT it to be...

IT has very specific PARAMETERS---PARAMETERS est'd by the WHOLE of BIBLE (from GENESIS to REVELATION)—all of GOD'S WORD (not just part of it).

Which means that being confident that we are getting the GOSPEL RIGHT requires knowledge of not only HOW the gospel is communicated (throughout the pages in the NT)—but also the OT.

WE (IOW) need to be able support OUR GOSPEL (meaning its principles) in its pages (as well).

(A great way to determine whether or not you can do this is by asking yourself the question, "In each of the major epics of the OT after the FALL: Noah, Abraham, the Israelites and the Exodus, the Judges and the Kings, the Prophets and the Exiles---in each of those---where and what do we find as the common message and principles of salvation (IOW: what must they do in each case to be saved---how is it the same—and no different in the NT?)

ONE GOSPEL message through and through—what is it?

THIS is a GOSPEL built on ALL of GOD'S WORD...

It is the GOSPEL which PAUL possessed and is pleading that the GALATIANS come BACK to...

NOT a gospel built on popular opinion or rock-star approval—BUT GOD'S WORD from beginning to end.

(AND again) if the GOSPEL we possess CANNOT be supported or est'd upon such parameters THEN we have NO BUSINESS being confident it is the RIGHT ONE (any more than the GALATIANS could be confident that what they were currently toying with—was the right ONE)...

AND FOR that REASON (I call) this a “GOSPEL BOMB” —since it is the KIND of truth WHICH has the ability to blast away (any of the false notions) we may have as it relates to this very issue (confidence about getting the gospel right)...

ONCE we realize that come judgment DAY---NOT ONLY will GOD NOT accept just any version (but only the right version) ---BUT ALSO---that such a version requires AGREEMENT in both the Old and New Testaments---A GOSPEL which FITS (from Genesis to Revelation)---(all of sudden) we realize (also) the need to PUT our FOCUS (there—into God’s WORD) and forget about what others THINK—or where the CURRENT WAVE of CHRISTIANITY and her rock-stars are headed...

(This again) was Paul’s agenda in saying what he does to the GALATIANS (in verses 10-12)...

HE knew (HOWEVER) there was more THAT needed to be done IF the GALATIANS were to comeback to “GOSPEL CENTER” in their thinking...

And what that is---IS our final verses in our CHAPTER (and new material for TODAY)...

6. Getting the gospel right also requires death to self and a willingness to boldly obey God no matter the cost.

6.1. And (here) is where the rubber really meets the road...

6.2. It is ONE THING (a rather easy thing) to SAY that the GOSPEL I possess will NOT be dependent on the approval of men, but supported by the Word of GOD (of all of it)—it is an ENTIRELY DIFFERENT THING to SAY that THIS is what it will BE (when doing so) may COST me something.

6.3. And for Paul such was the case...which is what our final verses in chapter ONE communicate to us. Paul’s journey to getting the GOSPEL right required (also) death to self and a willingness to boldly obey God no matter the cost.

6.4. In re: to death to self (no matter the cost):

6.5. (13-14)

6.6. “I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it...I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age...(I was) extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers” = These are the words of man WHOSE is very CAREER minded! A man who is focused on GETTING to the top of heap as fast as he possibly CAN (and is willing to DO whatever it takes—including kill people) to GET there! And this (according to his own words) was the Apostle Paul (within Judaism). He was (as he states in Phi 3) a “Pharisee of Pharisees”---a guy whose WHOLE LIFE (and every fiber of his being) was devoted to becoming a LEADER within the Jewish religion---TO BECOMING a ROCK-STAR!

6.7. This (more than anything) is probably why he wasn’t married (there was no time for it!).

6.8. This (also) though shows us HOW much his career meant to him in Judaism---AND (therefore) HOW much he gave up in order to come to Christ—YET he did it W/O hesitation or W/O the need for support or approval from others (15-17).

6.9. “I did not immediately consult w/ anyone” = no need for moral support.

6.10. “Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me = no need for approval from others (even the rock-star approval of the apostles).

6.11. “but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus” = (As we discussed in our BACK-STORY to the book---AND---as we see supported in ACTS 9) Damascus is where Paul was converted. From a Christian standpoint, it was a po-dunk place in the middle of nowhere. Jerusalem was the place to be (if you were going to Be SOMEBODY on the Christian scene—if you were going to be a Christian rock-star). Yet again he doesn’t go there, instead Paul stays in almost obscurity (in “Arabia”and “Damsacus”)---the “golden boy” who once garnered the spotlight and (no doubt) loved the attention of the Jewish elite he rubbed shoulders with---stays AWAY from it all. And he does it (AGAIN) W/O hesitation.

6.12. Hopefully you see it---THERE has been a BIG CHANGE in life of PAUL (that’s what he is telling us here)! What once mattered NO LONGER matters...

6.13. And the REASON he tells us THIS --is b/c this (too) is WHY he is getting what others are failing to GET (in relation to the GOSPEL)---THIS (also) is required...A DEATH TO SELF---a willingness to give it all up NO matter the COST.

6.14. That is what Paul did (and another reason) WHY he got GOSPEL RIGHT (b/c those things related to self—and selfish ambition) were no longer in the way.

6.15. How often does love of self and selfish ambition keep people from getting the GOSPEL right (from people being able to understand it and receive its saving benefits)? ALL THE TIME! (Mat 13:22, 19:16-24)

6.16. There is no doubt that many of those who fall away FOR THIS REASON don't see themselves that way—which is why this becomes the inevitable result: either you change or you change your gospel to accommodate your refusal to meet its standards so that it now “works” just the way you are—which means you no longer understand it—you no longer CAN get it right (IOW: what you now possess is a FALSE GOSPEL).

6.17. This (then) was a real concern that Paul had for the Galatians (and we should consider in relation to ourselves) = Are we willing to give up being somebody popular (or accepted) if that is what GETTING (proclaiming the true gospel) will mean? Are we willing to give up (possible dreams—or career choices we have made) for it (if that is where it leads)? (Why I say Paul was worried about this w/ the Galatians: b/c needing the approval of Christian rock-stars is an indicator of that. They clearly wanted that kind of attention –Gal 4:16-17, 6:13).

6.18. In re: (then) to boldly obeying it (no matter the cost):

6.19. (18-24)

6.20. Here we see (MORE) evidence of Paul's death to self. He says he was “still unknown to the churches of Judea who are in Christ” (not as something that bothered him) but as another attempt to make his point to the Galatians that GETTING the GOSPEL right IS ABOUT WHAT YOU KNOW (the WORD of GOD) and NOT WHO you know---Or WHO KNOWS YOU...(22-24)

6.21. Paul's conversion HAD encouraged the faith of others AND that was good enough (for him)...

6.22. That being said, the REAL instruction in these verses is IN the DIRECTION of OBEDIENCE. Through Paul's description of trips to “Jerusalem”, then “Syria and Cilicia” he is creating a timeline of BOLD OBEDIENCE to the GOSPEL.

6.23. My reason for saying that = b/c the whole REASON Paul travelled to those places was b/c he was forced to...forced to DUE deadly persecution HE was about receive from JEWS WHO had no appreciation for Paul's bold new obedience to the GOSPEL!

6.24. Some of you may remember when we discussed Paul's history during this time (and the details we AGAIN find in Acts 9), God had called Paul to be His special witness for the GOSPEL---a witness that (in the words of God) "would suffer much". And rather than run away from such a calling, Paul gave himself to GOD w/ BOLD OBEDIENCE—proclaiming the gospel in the synagogues and Jewish meeting places of every city he entered—AND as a result—HE suffered (just as God had said)---suffering which required him to be secretly shipped off to Jerusalem (three years after his time in Damascus)—

SO though Paul mentions it (here in v18) as IF he was just taking a nice leisurely stroll up to Jerusalem to hang out for a couple of weeks w/ Peter (or "Cephas" as he calls him here) —there was nothing leisurely about it...

He forced to GO THERE as a consequence of HIS BOLD OBEDIENCE in DAMASCUS—and the (subsequent death threats of the Jews) (Act 9:19b-26).

Then (for the same reasons---bold obedience in preaching the gospel) Paul was shipped off again to "Syria and Cilicia"(as he calls them in v21)---the last being the region of his birth (most specifically the city of Tarsus)—a place which would further put him into obscurity for the next 10 yrs of his life (Act 9:26-30).

6.25. And sandwiched in between all of this is verses 19 and 20 WHICH SEEM to be there as a means to KEEP reminding the GALATIANS of HOW much "being in—with the in-crowd" DIDN'T MATTER to PAUL (and likewise shouldn't matter to them). WHAT else could be HIS point (in saying what he does there) THAN JUST THAT?

6.26. (19-20)

6.27. Translation: “My time in Jerusalem was not spent making the rounds and getting autographs from all the BIG WIGS in Jerusalem. Though I was there (and could have met all of the apostles), I did not— (“Cephas” and “James” were the only ones I spent any time w/)—And that b/c WHO or “what they were makes no difference to me” (notice those are his exact words in 2:6). IOW: “EVEN when I had the chance to CAPITALIZE on the situation and move up in the RANKS (of CHRISTIANITY’S “Who’s Who club”) by GETTING my face and name out there w/ the other ROCK-STARS—I didn’t do it—it wasn’t important to me—AND if you think I am lying in what I am writing to you, “before God”—you KNOW—“I do not lie!”).

6.28. The fact that verse 20 even exists (which is where Paul swears before GOD that he is not lying) OUGHT to tell us THAT there is something more to Paul’s previous words than just wanting his travelling itinerary over the past 14 years (w/the Galatians). Paul is (instead) attempting to “SHOCK them in the right direction” by the truth of his own life (a life which WAS NOT caught up in the whole Christian rock-star thing—though he had every opportunity to).

6.28. In retrospect (then), Paul went from the guy voted “most likely to succeed” and the MVP of Pharisees—TO—a guy WHO could care less about such things... A GUY whose only crowd of attention or followers WERE those who wanted to KILL HIM---AND this ALL for the GOSPEL---ALL b/c he was willing to BOLDLY OBEY GOD no matter the COST---to preach it FEARLESSLY.

***** (AND a picture of what this looks like should be coming up on the screen now...) *****

In all seriousness (Beloved) it WAS such willingness on the part of PAUL to be BOLD and FEARLESS in his OBEDIENCE to GOD and HIS GOSPEL—THAT ALSO caused him to GET it (To possess the right message)... AND that B/C (like before) there was NOTHING that could GET in the way of him not...HE was a guy wide open to the TRUTH of what GOD said—no matter what that meant—and THAT MEANT—he was ready to SEE (and understand the gospel) for all it is—To SEE it and understand it correctly.

6.29. How often does a lack of bold obedience and fear of persecution—or other consequences keep people from getting the GOSPEL right? (like before) ALL THE TIME! (Mat 13:21; Rev 21:8)*Along these same lines, sometimes the gospel people choose to accept is based on what best fits the “lifestyle” they want to have—or the hobbies they want to pursue---which is the same difference (they are IOW: walking away from the true gospel b/c it constricts them from the lifestyle they deem most comfortable—or the one that can’t live w/o---ex. “I need a gospel which doesn’t make me give up playing in the mountains on Sundays—otherwise life wb too hard”).

6.30. As before there is no doubt that many of those who fall away b/c of this don't see themselves that way—which is why this becomes the inevitable result: either you change or you change your gospel to accommodate your refusal to meet its standards so that it now “works” just the way you are—which means you no longer understand it—you no longer CAN get it right (once again what you possess is a false gospel) (using the previous example: the true gospel which includes not forsaking the biblical church morphs into a gospel where the “church” becomes the outdoors/mtns).

6.31. And this (too) is Paul's concern regarding the GALATIANS: if they are going to GET the GOSPEL right...if they are going to replant themselves in the GOSPEL GROUND he had originally planted them (and NOT be persuaded) by every NEW “fad” and popular heresy which sweeps through the CHURCH---then IT would mean this also---a commitment to BOLD OBEDIENCE to GOD (in relation to WHAT HE has said)—and that (once more) no matter WHERE EVERYBODY else in the so-called Christian world seems to be HEADING.

And w/that THOUGHT I want CLOSE our time this morning...

THE THING that (I believe) is killing Evangelical Christianity (today) is very thing that will bring HER BACK—and that is a COMMITMENT to this VERY THING—to BOLD OBEDIENCE TO GOD—no matter the cost—no matter HOW much that separates us from others—or the PAST—or those we have considered the Christian rock-stars throughout HISTORY---b/c JUST LIKE it was for PAUL (so it wb for us) if we are willing to DIE TO SELF and commit in to GOD in this WAY...

We WILL BE those truly GETTING the GOSPEL RIGHT—understanding it in a FRESH and RADICAL NEW WAY—a way that is unadulterated by all the trappings of men (and their preferences or even politics)...

...PURE from the BIASES of denominational loyalties—or cultural upbringings...

CLEAR/CORRECT/TRUE and SOUND is the GOSPEL we will possess---if that is the HEART we bring to it---AND if IT IS GOD'S WORD we use to support it.

This (then) is what Paul was hoping for in the Galatians—and this (also) is its instruction to US—as that which prepares us to receive what will be said in the later chapters.

IF we are going to understand and receive it---We MUST (first) understand NOT only HOW important the GOSPEL is—but what kind of people WE MUST be in order to GET it RIGHT...May God use what was said today to THAT end.

Let's PRAY